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Annual ministerial review: implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and empowerment of women

Statement submitted by China NGO Network for International Exchanges, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2010/100.

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Statement

Women empowerment in development of outlying regions

The 5th Conference of the United Nations Non-Governmental Organizations Informal Regional Network (UN-NGO-IRENE)/Asia-Pacific on women empowerment in the development of outlying regions was held in Xining City, Qinghai Province, China, on 2 April 2010 under the sponsorship of China NGO Network for International Exchanges. The Conference was attended by about 50 delegates representing about 30 non-governmental organizations from 10 Asian countries, namely, Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, the Philippines, Pakistan, Thailand, Turkey and Uzbekistan. The participants had extensive discussions on the three subthemes: the present situation of women in the outlying regions, empowering women for economic and social development in the outlying regions and tapping non-governmental organization resources for women's development in the outlying regions.

- Considering that "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments with regard to gender equality and empowerment of women" has been established as the theme for the annual ministerial review, and the Development Cooperation Forum of the Economic and Social Council in 2010,
- Recalling the United Nations Millennium Summit held in 2000, the eight Millennium Development Goals in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, and Goal 3 ("Promote gender equality and empower women"), in particular,
- Acknowledging that the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in the outlying regions plays a key role in accomplishing Goal 3, and the eight Millennium Development Goals in general,
- Noting the master set of data contained in *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2009* compiled by an Inter-Agency and Expert Group on MDG Indicators led by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, in response to the wishes of the General Assembly for periodic assessment of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals,
- Affirming the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly on the five-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the 10-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the 15-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,
- Referring to the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Keeping the promise: a forward looking review to promote an agreed action agenda to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015", which serves as the basis for Member States deliberations on the outcome document for the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly, to be held in New York from 20 to 22 September 2010, to boost progress towards the Millennium Development Goals,

- Recalling the documents concluded in the previous four annual conferences of NGO-IRENE/Asia-Pacific held in Beijing under the co-sponsorship of the China NGO Network for International Exchanges and the Non-Governmental Organizations Branch of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs,

- Welcoming the efforts made by Governments, intergovernmental organizations like the United Nations, civil society organizations and the private sector at the international, regional, national and local levels to empower women in terms of political, economic, social, cultural, scientific, educational and other rights, as well as to improve their health care, sanitation, water supply and security conditions, while noting insufficiencies and gaps in some areas, and urging Governments to redouble their efforts in this regard,

- Recognizing that although the Asia-Pacific region has been established as an economic powerhouse and has experienced rapid economic growth, inequalities have grown in many countries and women in the outlying regions face the most severe challenges of poverty and discrimination, especially in the wake of the recent world financial and economic crises,

We, participants of the 5th Conference of the UN-NGO-IRENE/Asia-Pacific, would hereby conclude the following recommendations to the annual ministerial review of the Economic and Social Council in 2010:

(a) Concerted efforts at international, regional, national and local levels should be intensified to guarantee the full and effective implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly;

(b) Governments should provide sufficient political, financial, institutional and other relevant support to ensure the participation of women on an equal basis with men at all levels of decision-making processes;

(c) More intensive efforts should be made by the Governments, civil society and the private sector to ensure full employment and the generation of decent work for women;

(d) Partnerships among the Governments, civil society and the private sector should be enhanced to promote gender equality. The UN-NGO-IRENE/Asia-Pacific, as a network having effectively operated for five years, should be encouraged to strengthen its role as a platform to coordinate and assist both regional and national non-governmental organizations in moving further towards gender equality and to help with the implementation of Goal 3 as well as the other Millennium Development Goals;

(e) Enterprises and corporations should adopt appropriate strategies to promote the rights, welfare of and equal pay for women workers, in particular women workers from the outlying regions with a family living on their remittance;

(f) The stereotypical attitudes and behaviour towards women and girls should be changed, and men should be encouraged to bear equal responsibilities with women in areas such as domestic and caregiving work;

(g) With public education, vocational education and skills training becoming more accessible and affordable for girls and women in urban areas, girls and women

in rural and outlying regions should have equal access to public education, vocational education and skills training at all levels, as well as other public and social services, so as to improve their productivity and abilities for making a living;

(h) Governments should make sufficient investments into physical and social infrastructures, in particular in energy and water resources, to alleviate the burden of unpaid work that typically involves women;

(i) All women should have the rights to enjoy high-quality, affordable and accessible health care, education and services, so as to reduce maternal mortality, increase births assisted by skilled attendants, have access to safe and effective family planning and contraceptive methods and reduce the risk of diseases;

(j) Comprehensive strategies and efforts should be made to eliminate violence against women and girls, to combat all forms of trafficking in women and girls and to prevent sex-selective abortions. Efforts should also be made to protect women and girls victimized by or living under the threat of violence, to investigate, prosecute and punish the perpetrators of violence and to engage communities and civil society organizations in eliminating violence against women and girls. Shelter should be provided to them when necessary;

(k) Governments should improve conditions for livelihood of women living under conflict situations or being internally displaced;

(l) In the light of the special difficulties encountered by women in outlying regions in their empowerment of economic and social rights, Governments and social organizations at all levels should adopt concrete measures to initiate and support projects dedicated to improving their chances of participation and to building their capacities.